DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 796 CG 022 956

AUTHOR Muzekari, Louis H.; And Others
TITLE Youth Commissions: Effective Instruments for Development of Adolescent Services.
PUB DATE Aug 90
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (98th, Boston, MA, August 10-14, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Change Agents; Community Services; *County Programs; Organizational Objectives; *Program Development; *Youth Programs

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development and implementation of a county Youth Services Commission beginning with its inception, organizational structure, and subsequent role in facilitating county-wide programs for adolescents. As a branch of county government, with an independent staff, the Commission employed a subcommittee format to bring together a broad cross-section of key community leaders and human services professionals to both develop and establish new and innovative programs for adolescents. The Commission's role as a catalyst has been an effective instrument of change, and has implications for the development of adolescent services in other communities. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED325796

Youth Commissions: Effective Instruments for Development of Adolescent Services

Louis H. Muzekari
Charleston Community
Mental Health Center
Charleston, South Carolina

Beatrice M. Maggio
Somerset County
Youth Services Commission
Somerville, New Jersey

Jean Krauss
Somerset County
Youth Services Commission
Somerville, New Jersey

CG022956

Presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Boston, MA., August, 1990.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Louis H. Muzekari

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

The present paper describes the development and implementation of a county Youth Services Commission beginning with its inception, organizational structure, and susequent role in facilitating county-wide programs for adolescents. As a branch of county government, with an independent staff, the Commission employed a subcommittee format to bring together a broad cross section of key community leaders and human services professionals to both develop and establish new and innovative programs for adolescents. The Commissions role as a catalyst has been an effective instrument of change, and has implications for the development of adolescent services in other communities.

Youth Commissions: Effective Instruments for Development and Implementation of Adolescent Services

The literature is replete with descriptions of a wide range of specialized programs for adolescents. These programs range from community drop-in-centers, to juvenile courts and school based interventions, to residential services.

However, there is a paucity of literature focused on the social, organizational and community systems that were instrumental in the inception of these programs. This critical factor, which often determines whether programs are effective in doing what they were intended to, is too often ignored resulting in community based programs that have little continuity, coordination and "vision".

Community based programs for adolescents would be more effective if they were conceptualized as part of a system geared toward providing a comprehensive range of identified services. Indeed, it is the lack of coordination across service systems that has limited the development and implementation of effective programs. A system with both a wide range of interventions and the capacity to coordinate multiple services is necessary to adequately address the issues of family, school and neighborhood which impact on growing up.

The present paper describes the development, and implementation of such a system in the form of a county wide Youth Services Commission (YSC) beginning with its inception, organizational structure, and subsequent role in facilitating county-wide programs for adolescents.

Procedure

Youth Services Commissions

In 1981 Youth Services Commissions were established by the Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, on the state level, in three counties and in several municipalities in each of these counties as part of a pilot project. The initial task was to bring together the chief administrators and officials of the court, law enforcement, education, and social and human service systems. Their objective was to examine the juvenile justice system and determine the manner in which services to youth could be enhanced and how those services could be provided using a coordinated approach. In Somerset County the commission sought to accomplish these objectives through a combination of the four "C's" printed on its letterhead: "Communication, Cooperation, and Coordination in the Community."

Initially the staff of the Somerset County YSC consisted of a coordinator and an assistant who were hired outside the county system. This decision, as well as the creation of a separate YSC county department was unique in that the other two counties borrowed staff from the County's Probation Department on a shared time basis. By designating the YSC as part of County government with its own department head and budget its existence and mission were ratified. Indeed, it allowed for the addition of a fifth "C" - Continuity; a major variable in insuring its development, implementation and, most importantly, survival.

Another key element in the inception of the County YSC was the requirement that the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court serve as the Commission's Chairperson. The other members of the Commission, representing a broad cross section of participation, included chief

administrators and department heads of county departments, directors of public and private agencies, the superintendent of schools, law enforcement officials, and business leaders.

These individuals joined in establishing clearly defined goals and objectives for the YSC, which gave each member and agency represented a stake in the development and growth of new ideas and programs. Thus, the diverse interests and separate agendas were channeled into a single group process fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the final product - a county based coordinated system of services for adolescents.

Method

The primary mechanism utilized by the YSC for development of its Youth Services Plan and implementation of service elements is the subcommittee. The Needs Assessment Subcommittee is the major standing committee of the YSC and is responsible for designing surveys that provide the data base so critical for identifying target populations in need of new or improved programs, uncovering gaps in the service delivery system, and insuring coordination of services.

The surveys designed by the Needs Assessment Subcommittee, as well as the analysis of findings, shaped the development and implementation of services and programs for adolescents. Initially these surveys were conducted as precursors to the development of County plans and did serve their purpose in identifying needed services.

More recently however, a new system was developed by the Needs Assessment Subcommittee. The Adolescent Information Form (AIF), is a one page

computerized data sheet completed at intake by 28 provider agencies and the court on every juvenile between the ages of 10 and 18 accessing the system. Client confidentiality is insured by safeguards in access and processing. It is the only data collection system in the state that crosses agency and juvenile justice guidelines. The aggregate data collected provides the YSC and other county agencies with an ongoing mechanism to develop adolescent profiles of specific target poplulations (alcohol abusers, school drop-outs, emotionally disturbed youth, etc.) and monitor service utilization, identify gaps in service delivery and plan more effectively for the provision of services to adolescents.

The AIF captures pertinent demographic, familial and personal data on each adolescent inclusive of school status, past intervention history, primary reason for referral, contributing factors for referral, referral source and action taken by the agency completing the form. In addition to providing descriptive base line data, this computerized system can track adolescents as they proceed through the various systems.

Additionally, information gathered from the AIF is shared with youth serving institutions and agencies and other County Planning bodies on a regular basis. These include the Human Services Advisory Council, the Local Advisory Council on Drugs and Alcohol and the County Mental Health Board. This process facilitates planning efforts and fosters the development of services that are both coordinated and integrated.

Once a problem or a need is identified through the AIF, the YSC either assigns it to an existing subcommittee or creates another for further study and eventual solution to the problem. The participants on each subcommittee include not only Commission members but other professionals within the community with expertise in the particular area assigned for study.

The subcommittee designs a blueprint for the projected program including the program philosophy, goals, objectives, and admission criteria. Funding sources to implement the program are then identified and a lead agency is selected to implement the program. Generally the subcommittee is dissolved at this juncture, however sometimes they remain as an advisory body to the program they created.

Municipal Youth Service Commission (MYSC)

Municipal YSCs constitute the third tier (state, county, municipal) in the equation. They also plan, implement and coordinate services focused on prevention/awareness initiatives, but more importantly establish neighborhood linkages that are critical to service delivery.

The membership of MYSCs essentially parallels that of the state and county YSC with their top level directors. Typically municipal commission membership includes the mayor, town council members, school superintendents and principals, teachers, clergy, police officers, business professionals and concerned citizens.

Coordination of planning also occurs between the County YSC and Municpal commissions. Respresentatives of MYSCs present reports on their progress at the monthly County YSC meeting. In addition the County YSC assistant coordinator attends each MYSC monthly meeting acting in an advisory/resource capacity. Municipal specific data from the AIF is also shared with each MYSC to assist them in their planning efforts.

A Council of Municipal Commissions, which is made up of representatives of all of the local commissions and several County Commission members, was created to strengthen the relationship between the Municipal and County Commission. This Council provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and

planning efforts that are pertinent to each of the local bodies and which may affect the county or state Commission.

Recently the County YSC office has been expanded with the appointment of an Administrator, with the assistant coordinator elevated to the coordinator position. The major function of the new assistant coordinator is to assist already established Municipal Youth Services Commissions and to develop new Municipal Commissions in other communities in the County.

Results

During the existence of the County Youth Services Commission a number of noteworthy and innovative programs have been established at both the County and Municipal level to meet the needs of adolescents.

For example, the first survey conducted by the Needs Assessment Subcommittee clearly pointed to alcohol abuse as the most serious adolescent problem in the County. Today, there are a variety of agency alcohol programs, a Certified Alcoholism Counselor in every school in the County, an outpatient adolescent/family treatment program, and the states only halfway house specifically for recovering adolescents.

The work of other subcommittees have lead to the development and implementation of a wide range of programs for adolescents. Among them are:

(1) The Twilight Program - a program for adolescents who lack the skills and attitudes to get and keep a job. Since 1984 this program has served over 300 adolescents, of whom less than 10% have had subsequent contact with the court system. Additionally it has become a model for replication by other New Jersey counties as well as nationally in other states.

(2) A Family Crisis Intervention Unit was incorporated into a Community Mental Health Center and was designed as a diversionary program for adolescents and their families.

(3) A Suicide Prevention, Education, and Intervention program was established to provide services to the county school system.

(4) A Sexual Abuse Treatment Program brought together youth services, law enforcement, and mental health.

(5) Passages - a short term living community facility was developed as an alternative to residential placement or incarceration to enable teenagers to develop abilities and skills focused on "community survival."

(6) Pathways - a program designed to foster "independent living skills" such as banking and credit, food and nutrition, budgeting and job hunting, etc.

Among other activities of the YSC are a bimonthly newsletter, a directory of services and resources, brochures distributed in the schools for children and adolescents on relevant issues, etc. Appendix 1 reveals a chronology of the plans and accomplishments of the YSC, and Appendix 2 taken from the 1990-1992 County Youth Services Plan presents the work and plans of the 7 municipal commissions.

Discussion and Conclusions

The foregoing overview of the inception, development and ongoing functions of the YSC, as well as highlights of its major accomplishments, indicate that they are meeting their goal. The basic premise that the active involvement of

the major county systems and sub-systems is critical to the development of an effective delivery of service systems is clearly revealed. The programs that have been implemented are definitely linked to the organizational structure of the YSC beginning at the state level and proceeding down to the County and Municipalities. Whether they are school systems, law enforcement, mental health, social services, or non-profit human services agencies, the YSC serves as the catalyst employing a pro-active approach beginning with identifying needs and working towards developing programs to address them. Indeed, the fact that 28 agencies and the court agreed to support the AIF, underscores both the level of commitment to the provision of youth services and underscores the philosophy of "Communication, Cooperation, and Coordination in the Community"- and there has been "Continuity".

There is no question that the movement to a locally based coordinated service system focusing on families and communities is essential in meeting the challenges posed by adolescents. These services must include both primary treatment and prevention with emphasis on integration of services.

The organizational model as presented has been an effective instrument of change, and has implications for the development of adolescent services in other communities. Indeed, the development of community based services must be predicated on a model which views programs within the context of the community-at-large and brings together its diverse resources in a fashion that not only sustains programs but creates a climate and organization that encourages their ongoing growth and development.

APPENDIX 1

PREVIOUS PLANS/RECOMMENDATIONS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recommended Priorities	Action
1983 Plan	
Juveniles in Need of Supervision (JINS) whose home situation is in need of crisis intervention.	Development of the Family Crisis Intervention Unit staffed by four full time and two part time mental health professionals trained in family systems therapy at the Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center.
Juveniles using drugs or alcohol.	Development of the Comprehensive Family Treatment of Adolescent Alcohol Abuse Program at Catholic Charities to provide outreach, advocacy, family therapy, a coordination of services, case management and aftercare as a dispositional alternative for the Family Court. Creation of Cedar House, a male adolescent half way house for recovering alcoholics, which provides a re-entry orientation to family, school and community for those youth who have completed a detoxification and residential treatment program. Development and distribution of two "IT'S THE LAW" brochures regarding the penalties associated with the serving of alcohol to minors.
Juveniles without the skills, attitudes or values to get and keep a job.	Creation of the Twilight Program at Somerset County Vocational School providing concentrated vocational skills training, pre-employment skills, personal counseling and job placement for adjudicated and at-risk youth.

	Development of Pathways to provide structured life skills counseling and outreach services to adolescents in preparation for independent living.
Delinquents who need more supervision than Probation.	Development of the Probation Department's Somerfields Program which provides a full day program of group and individual counseling, education, vocational guidance and recreation for adjudicated adolescents.
	Development of the Pre-Parole Planning Project, in cooperation with the Department of Corrections, Bureau of Parole, to lessen the recidivism rate by providing intensive juvenile parole supervision, family and community based input into parole orders and immediate access into community based treatment programs.
JINS whose family is disorganized but can be managed in the community.	Creation of the GRASP Program at Catholic Charities to provide support outreach, individual and family counseling, recreation and advocacy.

1986 Plan

Adolescents who are runaway, homeless or throwaway.	Development of Passages, an interim living facility, operated by the Somerset County Youth Shelter, for adolescents who can no longer remain in their own home and need to learn independent skills.
	Creation of the Runaway Hot Line at Middle Earth to provide crisis intervention and referral to runaways and potential runaways.

Suicidal Children	Development of a Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program at the Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center which provides awareness, prevention and intervention in coordination with the local school systems.
Victims of child sexual abuse.	Creation of a comprehensive early intervention, clinical assessment and treatment program centered at Your Doctor's Care, a medical facility, utilizing a coordinated approach by the Prosecutor's Office, DYFS and the Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center. Development and distribution of an "It's the Law" brochure which discusses the legal ramifications of reporting child abuse.
Children who are sex offenders.	Utilizing a two vicinage approach (Somerset and Morris), a concept paper has been drafted and plans are currently underway to implement a comprehensive program for adolescent sex offenders through the selection of lead agencies and the securing of funding.
Pregnant and parenting teens.	Expansion of the Twilight Program has been effected to provide job skills, personal counseling and child care for this target population.
Youth who have problems with sexual identity.	Tracking of the magnitude of this problem through the AIF and making known the work of the Hyacinth Foundation especially as it relates to AIDS education.

Improve professionals knowledge of specific services and programs available to youth.	Creation of the Commission's Orientation Program which provides regularly scheduled on-site visits to community based agencies, the courts, police and schools to acquaint line workers from all the different disciplines to services available, the referral process, etc. Development and distribution to all professionals working with youth of the County Commission's revised and updated "Service Directory for the Adolescents of Somerset County" and the "Directory of Counseling Resources for Youth and Their Families" as well as the bi-monthly Commission newsletter. Sponsorship of annual Youth Services Commission Conference attended by professionals from all the different systems to acquaint them with available programs, the operation of the juvenile justice system, how the systems can work together in a coordinated manner, how to deal with resistance, etc.
Provide specialized training for professionals who are likely to encounter youngsters who have problems in such areas as substance abuse and suicidal tendencies.	Creation of the Commission's Interdisciplinary Training Program which provides topic specific training in recognizing signs and symptoms and referral and treatment processes of such problems as substance abuse, emotionally disturbed adolescents, domestic violence and child abuse for professionals from all the various disciplines who work with youth.

Optimally utilize the network of existing resources and support the close coordination of the spectrum of services.	Creation of the Commission's Coordinating Council which brings together all agencies involved in a specific case to discuss the case, set goals, objectives and time frames and assign responsibility to each agency for carrying out the mutually agreed upon plan. Implementation of "Linkages", the School Based Youth Services Program, at the Somerset County Vocational High School to provide on site counseling, health care, life skills, employment training, recreation, outreach and support through the cooperative effort of five community based agencies.
Support the development of prevention programs especially those aimed at the vulnerable adolescent populations.	Creation of the Commission's Teen Esteem Program with its three components: the Class-Room Teachers' Resource Directory, the Teen Esteem Players housed at Somerset County Vocational High School and the Teen Esteem Curriculum.
Support the use of day treatment programs for deinstitutionalized youth.	Development of the Allies Program, a partial care, after school program for emotionally disturbed adolescents at the Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center.

APPENDIX 2

SECTION V

MUNICIPAL YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSIONS

A. BOUND BROOK/SOUTH BOUND BROOK.....130

B. BRIDGEWATER/RARITAN.....132

C. FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP.....134

D. HILLSBOROUGH TOWNSHIP.....136

E. MANVILLE.....137

F. NORTH PLAINFIELD.....139

G. SOMERVILLE.....141

BOUND BROOK/SOUTH BOUND BROOK

The move to develop the Bound Brook/South Bound Brook Regional Youth Services Commission was initiated as a result of the implementation of the State Law Enforcement grant in 1982. This Commission was constituted by Borough ordinance with the initial membership appointed by the Mayor and Council.

In 1982 a needs assessment was conducted. The principal concerns expressed through this assessment were:

1. substance abuse (alcohol or CDS),
2. loitering and
3. shoplifting.

Key underlying factors to these issues were identified as:

1. the weakening of the family structure,
2. negative peer pressure,
3. poor self image and
4. the perception of drinking as being sophisticated.

Early in the history of this Commission, several initiatives took place:

1. Parents Groups were formed to support adolescents in their 7th grade year and then follow them through their high school years with activities planned jointly between youth and parents by grade.
2. Youths were actively recruited to participate on the Commission and in the development of programs for youth.
3. Middle Earth was chosen by the Commission to develop a Drop-In Center to attract at-risk youth from Bound Brook and South Bound Brook. This Center has been operational in a municipal building for 7 years and is partially funded by the Commission through County dollars from the Board of Freeholders.

Future initiatives of the Commission will be to:

1. continue programs already developed,

2. facilitate the development of programs to meet the identified needs of Bound Brook and South Bound Brook youth,

3. consider Project Graduation type programming and

4. involve more youth in the Commission process.

At the request of the JJDP Advisory Committee, the Bound Brook/South Bound Brook Youth Commission agreed to take the lead in primary prevention planning in order to prevent local youth from becoming involved with delinquency and other socially unacceptable behavior.

BRIDGEWATER-RARITAN

The Bridgewater-Raritan Regional Youth Services Commission was initiated as a result of the implementation of the State Law Enforcement grant in 1982. It is presently organized and operated under a constitution adopted in 1985. In 1989, the Bridgewater Commission on Substance Abuse consolidated under the aegis of the Youth Services Commission.

The Commission meets the second Wednesday of each month in the evening at either the Bridgewater or Raritan municipal building. Commission membership consists of representatives from the the boroughs of Bridgewater and Raritan who represent the following groups.

* Bridgewater-Raritan School system
* municipal police departments
* municipal councils
* social service agencies
* business and industry in the area
* medical profession
* general public

Subcommittees have been established upon need such as for the development, circulation and tabulation of a needs assessment. At present a task force has been set in place to explore the establishment of one or more youth centers in Bridgewater and Raritan. Additionally, an effort is being made to expand active Commission membership.

The primary needs assessment relied upon at this time is the Adolescent Information Form Statistical Report by municipality prepared by the Somerset County Youth Services Commission. It has been recognized by the Commission that a more extensive and comprehensive survey should be conducted again. Other data on community needs have been drawn from members of the Commission based on their professional and occupational activities and from agencies which have attended Commission meetings and presented discussions of their activities and experiences in the community.

From all of these sources of information, it is recognized that the number one problem in the community of youth is substance abuse. In order to address this problem, more preventive programs for youth are needed, particularly for youth in the 12 to 13 age range.

The Commission has initiated and supported the following programs:

1. Project Graduation - a program to provide graduating seniors from the 2 high schools a means of celebrating their graduation with year long activities in an environment free of drugs and alcohol. The success of this program is reflected in police reports showing no incidents of graduation parties where substance is used,

2. TASK (Take A Stand For Kids) - a program where parents pledge to hold substance free parties in their homes and discourage their children from attending any parties that are not substance free,

3. YES (Youth Employment Service) - a service for youth which advertises potential jobs and is updated regularly and posted in the schools and throughout the community,

4. Scholarship Fund - a fund established by the Commission in memory of a student Commission member and awarded to a senior each year from each of the 2 high schools and

5. Recreational Activities - pool/dance parties sponsored by the Commission for high school students and held at the local YMCA.

In the development of programs, the Commission works with not only those organizations represented by its membership such as the schools, councils and police departments, but with other community organizations of related interests.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP

The Franklin Township Youth Services Commission, as it is currently formed, was created by Township Ordinance on November 10, 1987. The resolution naming the first members was adopted March 8, 1988. The charter for the Commission was drafted in June of 1988 and subsequently adopted.

The Commission is composed of a cross section of the community as follows.

* two Township Council members
* one representative from the clergy
* one representative from business/industry
* a juvenile police officer
* the Township Manager or designee
* two Board of Education members
* three citizens from the Township

All subcommittees of the Commission are ad-hoc. Currently there are three such committees established:

1. Drug/Crime Watch,
2. Service Availability Information and
3. Drop-In Centers.

For the initial needs assessment, the Commission used existing information from a survey conducted by the Franklin Township High School, "Patterns of Drug Use Among Junior High and Senior High School Children." Additionally statistical information was studied by the Commission from the Adolescent Information Report for Franklin Township compiled by the County Youth Services Commissions. Feedback was gathered from a community meeting of parents, children and personnel from the Somerset County Family Counseling Service, Franklin Township Whole Life Program, Franklin Township Recreation Department and a representative from the Township Council.

The aforementioned survey types covered all Franklin Township High School students and all adolescents, parents and service providers that had interaction with Township youth.

The priority areas of need derived from the various sources of information are:

1. recreation,
2. drug/alcohol abuse prevention,
3. community/family crisis intervention,
4. local service/resource directory for youth and
5. pregnancy issues.

Commission planning efforts will be geared towards these areas of need.

Through the various organizations represented on the Commission, a number of programs have been instituted:

* A counseling component to the Township's Latchkey Program
* A kindergarten through third grade drug abuse prevention series conducted by the police
* A Student Assistance Program lecture series in the public schools
* A service directory for township youth developed by the Commission and the Township
* A drug exhibition kit initiated by the police
* A drug/crime hotline - 873-TIPS sponsored by the police
* An open forum between the Youth Services Commission and township youth

The Commission is primarily a coordinating commission that will advocate for agencies in the county and township to provide the needed services for youth. The main thrust of the Commission will be the development of drop-in centers for community youth.

HILLSBOROUGH

The Hillsborough Commission was reorganized in February of 1989 and was constituted through Mayoral appointment and Township Committee confirmation at a regularly scheduled meeting. The present meeting schedule of the third Monday of each month was adopted by the membership of the Commission.

Its membership is comprised of the following representatives from the community.

* Township offices
* local business community
* STOPP advisor who is also a school faculty member
* Juvenile Division of the Township Police Department
* Recreation Commission

Mayor Peter J. Biondi currently chairs the Commission.

KID (Kids Intratownship Delegation) exists as a subcommittee of the Commission and is comprised of students from the Middle School.

An extensive survey was prepared by the Commission and administered to students in the Middle School and High School with the consent and cooperation of the Board of Education in May of 1989. The results of this survey indicated:

1. a pronounced interest in the creation of a Youth Center and
2. a continuation of STOPP (Students to Offset Peer Pressure) activities. (The STOPP program is partially funded by the Commission through a grant from the County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Due in part to the fact that Middle School students are now being included in STOPP activities, this program has doubled its activity over the last year. A STOPPateer program is also planned for grades K-2 using puppets for substance abuse programs.

Alternatives are currently being explored with regard to the expressed need for a community youth center.

The Hillsborough Township Recreation Commission and the local business community are heavily represented on the Commission. The Vice-Chairman of the Commission is in regular contact with Board of Education administrators who support and cooperate with Commission efforts.

MANVILLE

The Manville Youth Services Commission was created in 1985 by the directive of the Manville Borough Council. Prior to the Commission's creation, the Manville Awareness Committee existed as a school/community partnership to address the needs of Manville youth. To prevent duplication of effort, the Awareness Committee ceased to exist when the Manville Commission was established. Members of the Awareness Committee were among the first individuals appointed to the Commission. Annually, the Mayor of the Borough of Manville appoints the members of the Commission.

Ad-hoc committees are established on an as needed basis. As an example, the first ad-hoc committee was formed to develop the needs assessment instrument used to determine the needs of Manville's youth.

In 1985 a needs assessment instrument was developed to elicit opinions regarding:

1. the problems exhibited by Manville youth,
2. the reasons why these problems exist and
3. the needed community based programs to address the problems.

The needs assessment was administered to over 200 persons in Manville representive of those living and working in Manville.

* student population
* clergy
* law enforcement
* business sector
* borough population at large

From the survey results, the following problems were identified as the most serious:

1. alcohol and drug use,
2. vandalism,
3. loitering and
4. negative social behavior related to peer pressure.

Survey participants indicated that the preferred course of action was to establish a safe, supervised setting where Manville youth could participate in wholesome social and recreational activities without drugs or alcohol. In this setting, counseling should be available to address substance abuse and other issues relating to child and adolescent growth and development.

In September of 1986, the Manville Youth Center was established in a district school as the supervised social and recreational setting for youth. Since its inception, Catholic Charities has been the lead agency retained by the Commission to run the Center.

Other programs sponsored by the Commission include:

1. support for an annual high school graduation breakfast (a drug and alcohol free activity),

2. a scholarship to enable a Manville High School student to attend the summer Joseph Baldwin Academy for Eminent Young Scholars,
3. sponsorship of 2 Manville Little League teams and

4. participation of Center youth in a variety of community sponsored drug and alcohol abuse awareness programs.

The membership in the Commission represents a broad range of professional and community groups that share a commitment to help our youth. As a consequence, Commission relationships with pertinent support groups are many, strong and of long duration. Communication links have been established with the following groups.

* the Manville Borough Council

* the Manville School District

* local businesses

* churches

* the local police

* many community-based recreation groups

NORTH PLAINFIELD

The North Plainfield Youth Services Commission was formed in June of 1985 by Borough Ordinance Number 667-J-85-21 (amended December, 1986) to serve as a coordinating agency for youth services within the Borough. The first meeting was held in October of 1985.

Commission membership includes a representation of community people who impact on the lives of youth.

* Mayor
* Superintendent of Schools
* Borough Council member
* representative of the school system (Board of Education member)
* Chief of Police
* Juvenile Police Officer
* two members from the school community
* eight citizens appointed by the Mayor with the advise and consent of the Borough Council

Meetings are held monthly, eleven months of the year with minutes recorded of each meeting and filed at Borough Hall. The Commission operates under a set of By-Laws that were revised in March of 1988.

Subcommittees of the Commission are formed as needed and chaired by a member of the Commission. Community members with particular expertise in identified areas are asked to assist with various projects.

In 1986, a Needs Assessment Survey was developed for adults and youth. Both groups were asked to respond to questions about youth problems, needed services and programs. There were many areas of agreement between the two groups. Areas of concern and need identified from the survey were:

1. job opportunities,
2. weekend activities and
3. alcohol and drug awareness.

In 1989, a revised survey was given to 6th, 8th and 10th graders and the results are being tabulated. An adult survey has been prepared and is waiting distribution from the Mayor's Office.

The following programs have been initiated in response to the results of the first needs assessment surveys.

1. Youth Yellow Pages - a booklet listing agencies, activities and hotline numbers for youth and their families which was printed and distributed in 1987 through the schools and community. The booklet is updated and redistributed twice a year.

2. Job Bank - listing of available jobs for youth which is updated regularly and posted in the schools, the library, borough hall and at the police station.

3. Project Graduation - a drug and alcohol free celebration for graduating seniors in high school which provides activities throughout the year and has operated entirely by volunteers for the past two years.

4. Hotline Card - a laminated emergency telephone number hotline card distributed to all youth in 1988.

5. BABES - a drug and alcohol prevention program used in the third grades in North Plainfield.

6. Youth Issues and Answers - a Commission developed half hour program aired on local cable TV addressing topics of concern using county professionals with particular expertise and Commission members as hosts. The first topic was suicide and future programs are planned around other identified topics. Tapes of the show are housed in the community library.

Future projects to be initiated in the Fall of 1989 by the Commission to address identified areas of need are:

1. Phone Friends - a program for latchkey children that is a telephone reassurance line where children can call with problems or because they are lonely. Volunteers are trained and supervised by professionals to respond appropriately under normal and emergency situations.

2. Funding - Commission is exploring various funding resources including establishing a tax exempt corporation to receive funding for programs.

SOMERVILLE

The Somerville Commission was established in 1985 as a result of a countywide conference held by the County Youth Services Commission to facilitate the development of municipal Commissions. The following key members of the Borough attended the initial organizational meeting of the Commission.

* Mayor
* Chief of Police
* Board of Education members
* local ministers
* representatives from social service agencies serving youth in Somerville

In November of 1985, the Somerville Commission convened a meeting of key community professionals and youth to determine areas of concern to be addressed. The highest priority was to facilitate communication, cooperation and coordination of services to youth.

In 1988, as a result of concerns expressed by the juvenile police officer, local educators and social service providers, the Commission in a joint effort developed and implemented a substance abuse program for Somerville Middle School children. With funding from the Commission through the Board of Freeholders, a part-time substance abuse counselor was hired for this program.

Response to this initiative in the Middle School has been overwhelmingly positive. Therefore, the Commission is focusing on additional program development for middle school aged children.

Other specific areas of interest to the Commission are:

1. parent education,
2. parent involvement in education,
3. teaching children to parent and
4. addressing the concerns surrounding alcohol and substance abuse.

At the request of the JJDP Advisory Committee, the Commission plans to take the lead in primary prevention planning for all youth in the community.